

From the Managing Editor

THIS issue of **Soldiers** focuses on the Joint Contingency Force Advanced Warfighting Experiment that ranged from the Caribbean across Louisiana to Nevada and employed soldiers from New York, North Carolina and Texas.

Meanwhile, other service members are preparing for the January inauguration of the nation's new president. Read about their activities in "Hailing the Chief."

Seasonal fare includes the historic tale of BG Anthony McAuliffe's classic Christmas response to German surrender demands. His now-famous reply, "Nuts," baffled his would-be captors and energized his troops during that Christmas season of 1944.

Finally, GEN George Washington's 1776 Christmas present to the nation — the crossing of the Delaware and his victory at Trenton — is featured on our back cover.

This issue is our gift to you, and with it we offer our warmest best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season. May the coming year be your best ever.



Dietary Supplements

THANK you so much for the content, accuracy and targeted approach to providing soldiers with the information in your November "Hot Topics" insert. Our soldiers will greatly benefit. I know Beth Reece spent a lot of time on this project. Thank you.

LTC Vicky Thomas
Womack Army Medical Center
Fort Bragg, N.C.

MY compliments to **Soldiers** on the excellent November "Hot Topics" insert. I have long been concerned that exchanges and General Nutrition Center stores on Army posts are selling spurious health remedies.

The Federal Trade Commission has repeatedly taken adverse actions against GNC (www.ftc.gov/opa/peadawn/F95/gennutritionco.htm) for making unsubstantiated claims about its products, yet they continue to operate on military installations.

Unfortunately, our educational system does a poor job of equipping citizens to make informed decisions about scientific matters.

Thanks for this issue of "Hot Topics" to help soldiers make informed choices about what they put in their bodies.

MAJ George B. Spence III
via e-mail

Gang Signs?

SOLDIERS flashing what appears to me as possible gang signs in a photo on page 40 in your October issue gave me an unpleasant surprise.

As we strive for a more professional Army, publishing such photos condones questionable military bearing.

CPT Albert M. LaBella
via e-mail

Getting Connected

JUST a quick comment on your October article, "Connecting the Army." Why didn't you mention the actual Army website, www.army.mil, in the entire article? I was very upset when you only mentioned sites that are not actually run by the Army. They are often run by former Army individuals and are for keeping in touch with soldiers after your time is served. For current information, why would you not go to the source?

Robert K Schell II
via e-mail

"Connecting the Army" was about .com and .net resources operated for Army people. The opening article, "Introducing AKO," made the point that the Army Homepage, www.army.mil, is the Army's public site while AKO, at www.us.army.mil, is the Army's intranet site. The Army Homepage was again listed in the "Useful Websites" sidebar.

YOUR article on AKO inspired me to immediately try to create an account. Unfortunately, National Guard members currently have a several-month wait. While I especially appreciated your links list, I think it would be good to post these links on your website so they could serve as a jumping-off point for Army surfers. Users will help you keep the sites current.

SSG Jim Syler, ILARNG
via e-mail

While many of the links listed already are included in the **Soldiers Online** links page, we'll consider expanding the list.

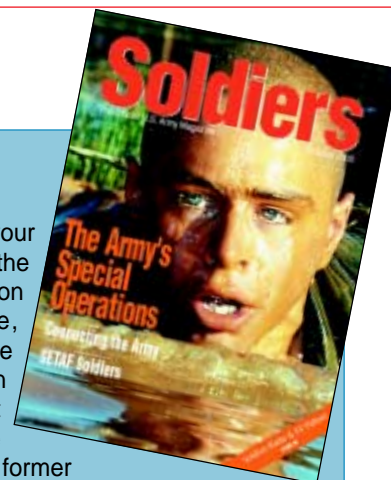
WHILE Army photographers only take the pictures and cannot function as uniform or attitude police, **Soldiers** magazine agrees that there is no place in the Army for gang activity. If you can validate your suspicion of "possible gang signs" in that photo, we will be happy to revisit the issue.

More on Identity Thieves

MY husband brought home a copy of the September **Soldiers**

so I could read the article on identity theft. While the article was very interesting and on target, the author left out a few points that might help victims.

Who knows more about your personal information than anyone? Your close relatives and friends who may have access to your personal history. I know this from experience, as I have been battling credit card companies for the last nine months to clear my credit after my father stole my identity and



If you have your proof and they still refuse to remove your name from the account and clear your credit, contact the agency that has regulatory power over that credit card bank. For federally regulated banks, call the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation at (800) 934-3342. FDIC will put you in touch with the Federal Reserve Bank for the state in which the credit card bank operates. For state-chartered banks, call the Office of the Currency, Customer Assistance Group, at (800) 613-6743. These regulatory agencies will investigate your complaint against the credit card company, and that is your best recourse. It beats the runaround we customers often get from just making phone calls or sending letters.

YOUR September identity thieves article was very appropriate. I only wish I had this information eight months ago when I went to purchase a vehicle and discovered that I had become a victim of identity theft. Thanks to the military police, special investigators, Dynamic Recovery Services and the three major credit-reporting agencies, I was able to restore

The Department of Defense and all members of the military need to take this issue more seriously. In today's wired world, the lack of safeguards for our Social Security numbers leaves all military members highly vulnerable to fraud

I REALLY enjoy the new look your magazine staff has been shaping over the past few issues. When I first joined the Army as a journalist four years ago, **Soldiers'** design was decidedly old-fashioned. Nowadays, the outstanding pictures and articles are displayed with an equally outstanding layout that makes the magazine a lot easier on the eyes. Case in point: Steve Harding's articles on the Southern European Task Force in the September issue were very well written and the pages were well-designed. I look forward to enjoying the magazine's new look in future issues. Thanks for all of your hard work.

*SPC Christopher Porter
Vicenza, Italy*

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Soldiers is for soldiers and DA civilians. We invite readers' views. Stay under 150 words — a post card will do — and include your name, rank and address. We'll withhold your name if you desire and may condense your views because of space. We can't publish or answer every one, but we'll use representative views. Write to: **Feedback, Soldiers, 9325 Gunston Road, Ste. S108, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581**, or e-mail: **soldiers@belvoir.army.mil**.

